

[CPMC. Joint Administrative Board. Construction photograph albums](#)

COLUMBIA-PRESBYTERIAN MEDICAL CENTER. JOINT ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD.

Construction photograph albums, 1925-1926.

2 volumes, 18 cm. x 26 cm. (circa 105 pages)

CUMC-0149

HISTORICAL NOTE: The Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center was an alliance between Columbia University, specifically its medical school, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and Presbyterian Hospital. The final agreement reached in 1922 required the two institutions to establish a “Joint Administrative Board” to oversee the planning and construction of a complex that would house both the hospital and the medical school – at the time located at two widely separated campuses in Manhattan.

Philanthropist Edward S. Harkness and his mother, Anna Richardson Harkness, purchased a 15 acre site in New York City’s Washington Heights neighborhood in 1915 as the site for the new campus. Construction began in 1925 and the main complex housing the hospital, and the medical, dental, and nursing schools opened in 1928. Structures housing Babies Hospital, the Neurological Institute, and the New York State Psychiatric Institute were inaugurated in 1929. The complex was known as the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, though no such corporate entity ever existed.

The Joint Administrative Board continued into the 1960s but met only rarely after the completion of the Medical Center.

SCOPE AND CONTENT: Two photograph albums documenting the construction of the original Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center from April 1925 until April 1926. Every aspect of the work is covered including excavations, laying of foundations, erection of the steelwork, and the progress of the bricklaying. Equipment such as steam shovels, dump trucks, drills, and pile drivers are depicted. While some images show laborers, they are usually from a distance and often indistinct. Only construction of the main Presbyterian Hospital-College of Physicians & Surgeons structure and the separate School of Nursing building, Maxwell Hall, is documented. Construction of the buildings housing Babies Hospital, the Neurological Institute, and the New York State Psychiatric Institute is not illustrated in these albums.

The images are snapshots of varying sizes though most measure 3 ¼” x 2 ¼” and all are black and white. Most are adhered to the album pages though some are now loose. The identities of the photographer or photographers is not known. Album pages are usually dated and sometimes have a short caption identifying the aspect of the construction that is being depicted. A few images have identifying information written on them.

ARRANGEMENT: In roughly chronological order.

LANGUAGE: English.

ACCESS: Open. Because of the fragility of the albums, access may be regulated by Archives & Special Collections staff.

Though the photographs were made for the Joint Administrative Board, it is not clear if Columbia possesses the copyright to them.

PROVENANCE: Gift of the New York-Presbyterian Hospital Office of Public Affairs (Columbia University Medical Center), 2000 (accession #200.01.20).

PROCESSING INFORMATION: The albums have been rehoused in acid free folders and a document box.

RELATED MATERIALS: Archives & Special Collections has additional photographs documenting the construction of the Medical Center in 1925-1929. Most of these have been digitized.

CITE AS: Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center. Joint Administrative Board. Construction Photograph Albums, Archives & Special Collections, Columbia University Health Sciences Library.

Subjects:

Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center – Photographs.
Columbia University. College of Physicians and Surgeons – Photographs.
Columbia University. School of Nursing – Photographs.
Presbyterian Hospital (New York, N.Y.) – Photographs.
Academic medical centers – New York (State) – New York – Photographs.
Construction equipment – United States – Photographs.
Construction industry – United States – Photographs.
Construction workers – United States – Photographs.
Hospitals – New York (State) – New York – Photographs.
Medical colleges – New York (State) – New York – Photographs.
Nursing schools – New York (State) – New York – Photographs.

Formats/Genres:

Black-and-white photographs. aat
Photograph albums. aat