

Archives & Special Collections, Columbia University Health Sciences Library

Jean Ketcham Lominska Collection of George Huntington Family Papers

LOMINSKA, JEAN KETCHAM, 1913-2010, collector.

JEAN KETCHAM LOMINSKA COLLECTION OF GEORGE HUNTINGTON FAMILY PAPERS, 1850-1985 (bulk 1858-1916)

.5 cubic feet (2 boxes, 1 flat box, 1 framed item)

M-0101

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: George Huntington, the physician for whom Huntington's Chorea or Huntington's Disease is named, was born April 9, 1850 in East Hampton, N.Y., the son of George Lee Huntington (1811-1881) and Mary Hoogland Huntington. Both Huntington's father and his grandfather, Abel (1778-1858), were physicians in East Hampton.

Huntington attended the Clinton Academy in his native town and was enrolled at the College of Physicians and Surgeons (P&S) of Columbia College, 1868-1871. He finished his medical studies at P&S in February 1871 with an inaugural thesis on opium. Because he was not yet 21 at the time, Huntington's diploma was not actually awarded until June 1872, though he was listed in the College records as a member of the Class of 1871. Shortly thereafter he settled in Pomeroy, Ohio, where he began practicing medicine.

While in Ohio, Huntington presented a paper entitled "On Chorea" to the Meigs and Mason Academy of Medicine in Middleport on February 15, 1872. In it, Huntington discussed the more common form of chorea, often found in children. He then went on to describe the "form of the disease which exists, so far as I know, almost exclusively on the east end of Long Island...The hereditary chorea, as I shall call it, is confined to certain and fortunately a few families, and has been transmitted to them, an heirloom from generations away back in the dim past." Based on his study of the casebooks of his father and grandfather and on his own observations, Huntington deduced the distinguishing characteristics of this rarer form of chorea: "1. Its hereditary nature. 2. A tendency to insanity and suicide. 3. Its manifesting itself as a grave disease only in adult life." Huntington pointed out that if the disease skipped a generation then it would never again manifest itself in the descendants of the original sufferer: "Unstable and whimsical as the disease may be in other respects, in this it is firm, it never skips a generation to again manifest itself in another; once having yielded its claims, it never regains them."

Published in the April 15, 1872 issue of Philadelphia's *Medical and Surgical Reporter*, Huntington's report was so lucid, accurate and poetic that the disease has come to bear his name. His insight into the rules of heredity predates by a generation the rediscovery of Mendel's laws of genetic transmission.

Huntington married Mary Heckard of Pomeroy in Oct. 1874. They had six children, five of whom survived into adulthood. The couple returned to New York soon after and settled in LaGrangeville, Dutchess County. Huntington practiced in this rural community until 1901 when ill health led him move to Asheville, N.C. When his health recovered in 1903, he returned to Dutchess County, settling in Hopewell Junction, where he practiced until 1914 when poor health forced him to retire.

Huntington was elected president of the Dutchess County Medical Society in 1887 and served as a New York State Commissioner in Lunacy for Dutchess County. He was an honorary member of the Brooklyn Neurological Society.

George Huntington died on March 3, 1916 of pneumonia at the home of his son, Dr. Edwin H. Huntington, in Cairo, N.Y.

SCOPE AND CONTENT: The Lominska Collection of George Huntington family papers contains material relating to George Huntington (1850-1916); his parents, George L. and Mary Hoogland Huntington; his aunt Cornelia; his siblings; and his children: Katharine, Charles G., Abel, Elizabeth, Edwin H., and Eleanor.

Included are such biographical materials as Huntington's marriage certificate; obituaries, memorial statements, and family reminiscences of George Huntington; and manuscripts, including a few letters from George Huntington's parents and aunt.

The bulk of the collection is comprised of drawings and photographs. George Huntington was a talented amateur artist and caricaturist and the collection has approximately 17 of his often humorous drawings as well as a sketch book. In addition, there are 7 illustrations and a booklet of drawings by his son Abel, who died at age 11 in 1891.

There are only a few photographs of George Huntington, though one is the much-reproduced image of him circa 1872 when he delivered the paper that brought him fame. The collection also includes photos of his sister, Mame Huntington Bridge, his brothers, Abel and Benjamin; his wife, Mary Heckard and her sister, Lucy; and all of his children. There are several group portraits of the Huntington family which include George Huntington, most taken near the end of his life, and a few images of the Huntington homes in LaGrangeville and Hopewell Junction, N.Y., probably taken in the 1930s or 1940s.

ORGANIZATION: Organized in five series: I. Biographical and Genealogical; II. Manuscripts; III. Drawings; IV. Photographs; V. Oversize

LANGUAGE: English.

ACCESS: Unrestricted.

PROVENANCE: Gift of the Lominska family, descendants of George Huntington through his daughter, Eleanor Ketcham, 2010 (acc.#2010.06.21). The collection is named for Eleanor's daughter, Jean Ketcham Lominska, who preserved and organized these papers.

RELATED COLLECTIONS: Archives & Special Collections' George Huntington Papers (acc.#2011.008) has additional papers of George Huntington and his family.

LC Subjects:

Huntington, George, 1850-1916.
Huntington family.
Huntington's chorea – History.
Physicians – Biography – New York (State)
Drawings (visual works)
Photographs.

MESH:

Huntington Chorea.
Huntington's Disease.

Lominska George Huntington Collection

Box Folder

Series I. Biographical & Genealogical

- 1 1 *Neurographs*, "Huntington Number," v. 1, no. 2, 1908
- 2 "A Biographical Sketch of George Huntington, M.D." by J.M. Winfield – copy of article in *Neurographs*, "Huntington Number"
- 3 "In Memorium George Huntington, M.D." by Nelson Borst, J.E. Sadlier, & J. M. Cotter: typewritten copy of obituary [from *Transactions, Medical Society of the State of New York?*], c.1916
- 4 "A Biography of George Huntington, M.D." by Charles S. Stevenson: photocopy of article from *Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine*, v. 2, no. 2, April 1934
- 5 Huntington, Charles G., son of George Huntington: untitled talk about his father and grandfather, with corrections and emendations, undated
- 6 "In My Corner," reminiscences of Charles G. Huntington, II, about his grandfather, George Huntington, undated but c. 1985 (photocopy of published article from unknown source)
- 7 "Extracts from the Childhood of the Huntington Family, Gathered together by one of them for the rest of them," by Katharine Huntington Hutchinson, daughter of G.H., November 27, 1933 (original typewritten copy with handwritten additions and corrections). Some pages apparently mixed in from her essay "Katharine Huntington Hutchinson: Her Book"
- 8 "Extracts from the Childhood of the Huntington Family, Gathered together by one of them for the rest of them," by Katharine Huntington Hutchinson, November 27, 1933 (modern typescript)
- 9 "Katharine Huntington Hutchinson: Her Book": includes some information on her married life in South Carolina (modern typescript)
- 10 "East Hampton," by Katharine Huntington Hutchinson, 1938 (modern typescript)
- 11 Copy of tombstone inscriptions of George L. and Mary Hoogland Huntington (G.H.'s parents)
- 12 Extract of US census information on the Huntington household in East Hampton, 1850 and 1860
- 13 Extracts from diary of Mary Hoogland Huntington, 1859-1860 (typed copy)
- 14 Newspaper clippings: "Dr. Huntington Gives Up His Practice;" obituaries of George Huntington, 1916 (2 items); death notice of G.H.; story on G.H. funeral, 1916; obituary of Mary Heckard Huntington, 1923; death notice of Abel Huntington (son), 1891

Lominska George Huntington Collection

Box Folder

1 15 "The Savior's Birth," poem written by Abel Huntington, Christmas 1891, while a patient at the Hospital for the Ruptured and Crippled, New York City (printed item); and sheet music for the accompanying tune (modern photocopy)

Series II. Manuscripts

16 Letter, with poem, from Santa Claus to George Huntington, 1858
17 "The Shipwreck, Composition No. 236, 1858" by A.C. Huntington
18 Letters to George Huntington: from Aunt Cornelia, Aug. 19 [no year]; from father, June 9 & Nov. 24, 1878; from mother, Nov. 3, 1889
19 "Grandma" to "my dear children," March 20, 1881
20 Mamie [Mary Elizabeth] Huntington Bridge [sister] to George & Mary Huntington, Shanghai, June 14, 1881
21 George Huntington to "Dear folks all," July 23, 1882
22 George Huntington: cough medicine recipe
23 George Huntington: "The Tale of a Crow," poem, signed "G.H." 3 pages
24 John Wallace [Huntington family boarder during G.H.'s childhood]: letter, 1878, by Robert MacKenzie, Dundee, Scotland, about Wallace; essay on Wallace, probably written by Katharine Huntington Hutchinson, c.1938; extract on Wallace copied from *Discovering Long Island*, by William Oliver Stevens 1939

Series III. Drawings

25 Two ink drawings, "I'm goin' a fishin!" and "I've been a fishin'" a sequence about a girl going fishing and coming back after falling into the water, signed "G.H. 1880"
26 Three ink drawings of a baby, cut from original page. Captions: "Sitter: a chewer," "Lost understanding," "Oh!"
27 Girl sitting in a chair: subject may be his daughter Katharine
28 "A.H. on his chair drawn by GH Sept 4th 1891": pencil drawing of son Abel Huntington, reading on his wheel chair when hospitalized with tuberculosis of the hip
29 Forest of evergreens, signed "G.H."
30 Pencil drawing: " ?? Birkenhead Abbey"

Lominska George Huntington Collection

Box Folder

1 31 Pencil drawing, political cartoon? "American Punch" written on bowl with man and grotesque figure on either side, "Geo Huntington 1879"
32 "Is it right for a man to do wrong?" apparently by G.H.
33 Two men in a sailboat, "GH 1891"
34 "The Tale of a Crow," G.H. poem, typed by Jean Ketcham Lominska, with illustrations by G. H. cut from original context and pasted on. Original manuscript of poem in folder 23
35 Girl in hat; two boots (2 ill. on one page)
36 Small landscape with flying ducks
37 Man's head in profile
38 Man with a mosquito biting his head, cut from original context
39 Sketch book by G.H.: scenes of Europe?, ships in distress, duck hunting, fishing, cartoon-like series of a man's mishaps while duck-hunting and subsequent illness, sculpture (one page signed "GH 1873")
40 Drawings by Abel Huntington (son), 7 items
41 Booklet of pencil drawings by his son, Abel

Series IV. Photographs

42 Bridge, Mame (Mary Elizabeth) Huntington, with seven children (including possibly Katharine Huntington?), and her brother George (?)
43 Bridge, Mame Huntington
44 Bridge, Mame Huntington, 1902
45 Bridge, Mame Huntington
46 Bridge, Frederick (husband of Mame)
47 Heckard, Lucy (sister of Mary Heckard Huntington)
48 Heckard, Lucy
49 Huntington, Abel (son, d. 1891), as child (2 items)
50 Huntington, Abel (brother) and Kate Smith, on stoop of Brooklyn home
51 Huntington, Abel and Kate Smith
52 Huntington, Benjamin H. (brother)
53 Huntington, Charles Gardiner (son): as young man
54 Huntington, Charles Gardiner: in middle age
55 Huntington, Cornelia (aunt): in old age
56 Huntington, Edwin H. (son): as young man playing violin (2 items)
57 Huntington, Edwin H.: as young man (reviews of his recitals attached to reverse)
58 Huntington, Edwin H.
59 Huntington, Edwin H.

Lominska George Huntington Collection

Box Folder

- 60 Huntington, Edwin H.: in middle age
- 61 Huntington, Edwin H. and Eleanor, with others at birthday party, c.1900
- 62 Huntington, Eleanor (Ketcham) (daughter): in class, Islip High School (?)
- 63 Huntington, Eleanor (Ketcham): about age 18

- 2 1 Huntington, Eleanor (Ketcham): as adult
- 2 Huntington, Eleanor (Ketcham): wedding portrait, 1911
- 3 Huntington, Eleanor (Ketcham): portrait and snapshot (2 items)
- 4 Huntington, Eleanor (Ketcham) & Elizabeth: smoking cigars with men, c.1900
- 5 Huntington, Eleanor (Ketcham) & Elizabeth: with cats
- 6-8 Huntington, Elizabeth (daughter)
- 9 Huntington, George: as young man, c.1872
- 10 Huntington, George (?): as young man [fragment]
- 11 Huntington, George: 2 printed photos that appeared in *Neurographs* issue (1908)
 showing the young Huntington (copy of photo in fo. 9) and in later life
- 12-13 Huntington, Kate Smith (sister-in-law)
- 14 Huntington, Mary Heckard (wife): as young woman
- 15 Huntington, Mary Heckard: in old age, reading
- 16 Huntington, Mary Hoogland (mother)?
- 17 Smith, Amelia (mother of Kate Smith Huntington)
- 18 Carte-de-visite of young man [possibly George L. Huntington?]
- 19 Cased photo [daguerreotype?] of unidentified boy
- 20 Huntington family, group photo, including G.H.
- 21 Huntington family, group photo, including G.H., c. 1895? [taken at same time as
 photos in fo. 26]
- 22 Huntington family, group photo, including G.H.
- 23 Huntington family, group photos on porch (2 items)
- 24 Huntington family on porch
- 25 Huntington family: G.H., Kate Smith Huntington, Abel Huntington, Mary H.
 Huntington
- 26 Huntington family: Katharine Huntington, Julia Bridge Austin (cousin), Charles
 Huntington, c.1895? (2 items) [taken at same time as photo in fo. 21]
- 27 Huntington home, LaGrangeville, NY, 1930s-40s? (3 items)
- 28 Huntington home, Hopewell Junction, NY, 1930s-40s? (2 items)

Lominska George Huntington Collection

Series V. Oversize

OV Box 1

Marriage certificate for George Huntington and Mary Heckard, 1874

Color photocopies of selected pages from 2 books owned by George Huntington
[originals not part of donation]

Photo of Catherine Pike Horton Heckard, mother of Mary Heckard Huntington, in later
Life [damaged; stored in plastic box]

Map Case 1:2

Drawing of man trying to read, surrounded by 3 children making noise, signed "GH
1884." Archivally framed.