

[Archives & Special Collections, Columbia University Health Sciences Library](#)

[George Huntington Papers](#)

HUNTINGTON, GEORGE, 1850-1916.

George Huntington papers, 1845-2000.

2.5 cubic feet (8 boxes, 2 flat boxes, 6 volumes)

M-0102

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 Elizabeth 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 the 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 papers include daybooks, ledgers, medical school notebooks, drawings, photographs, sheet music, and biographical records of George Huntington, his descendents and related families.

The daybooks and ledgers, 1871-1914 (with gaps), cover a substantial portion of Huntington's forty year career as a physician largely in LaGrangeville and Hopewell Junction, Dutchess County, N.Y. and give a good picture of the daily routine of a physician practicing in the rural U.S. in the late 19th century. While the patient's illness is rarely noted, the entries usually list the reason for each visit ("obstetrical," "bot. medicine"). Three of the ledgers are located in Series VIII, Oversize Items.

The notebooks from Huntington's studies at the College of Physicians & Surgeons (P&S) of Columbia College record lectures in medicine, surgery, obstetrics, and pharmacology given by Alonzo Clark, Thomas Markoe, James McLane, Willard Parker, and T. Gaillard Thomas. Huntington is particularly meticulous about noting the name of the lecturer, the subject of the lecture, and its date and time. The papers also include his medical school inaugural thesis and two papers he gave later in life on Huntington's chorea.

Huntington was a talented amateur artist and caricaturist and the papers include about 17 pencil and ink drawings by him (Box 5:10-27), as well as another 14 color drawings by an unidentified artist (Box 5: 28-29, Box 6: 1-12). There are also a few photographs of Huntington and many more of his children, grandchildren and related families dating from the late 19th into the mid-20th century.

While the papers contain no correspondence by Huntington or his family, there are several folders of letters of Robert and Mary Stewart of Washington, D.C. and Brooklyn, N.Y., 1872-1933. Their daughter, Marjorie, married George Huntington's son, Charles Gardiner Huntington, in 1906.

ORGANIZATION: Organized in eight series: I. Daybooks and Ledgers; II. Medical School Notebooks; III. Papers and Addresses; IV. Miscellaneous Family Material; V. Drawings; VI. Stewart Family Correspondence; VII. Photographs; VIII. Oversize Items.

LANGUAGE: English.

ACCESS: Unrestricted.

PROVENANCE: Purchased from William Huntington, great-great-grandson of George Huntington by descent from his son Charles G. Huntington, 2011 (acc. #2011.008; #2013.018); 1874-1876 ledger purchased at auction at Swann Galleries, New York, NY, April 2018 (acc. #2018.022).

RELATED COLLECTIONS: Archives & Special Collections' Jean Ketcham Lominska Collection of George Huntington Family Papers (acc. #2010.06.21) contains additional papers of George Huntington and his family.

REMOVALS: A copy of William Cullen's *Synopsis and Nosology: Being an Arrangement and Definition of Diseases* (Springfield, MA: Edward Gray for Nathaniel Patten, 1793) with the bookplate of George L. Huntington and the signature of Abel Huntington, has been added to the Health Sciences Library's rare book collection. A copy of Rensselaer Bentley's *Introduction to the Pictorial Reader...* (New York: Saxton & Miles, 1845) was transferred to Columbia's Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

LC Subjects:

Huntington, George, 1850-1916.

Huntington family.

Stewart family.

Columbia University. College of Physicians and Surgeons – Students.

Huntington's chorea – History.

Physicians – Biography – New York (State)

Medical education – United States – 19th century.

Medical students – New York (State) – New York – 19th century.

Medicine – Practice – New York (State) – 19th century.

Medicine – Study and teaching – United States – 19th century.

Daybooks.

Drawings (visual works)

Ledgers (account books)

Notebooks.

Photographs.

Sheet music.

Tintypes (prints)

MESH:

Education, Medical – United States.

Huntington Chorea.

Huntington's Disease.

**George Huntington
Papers, 1845-2000**

Series I: Daybooks and Ledgers (Note - 5 other vols. in Series VIII: Oversize)

Box Folder

- | | | |
|----------|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | Daybook, April 13, 1872 – March 8, 1874 |
| | 2 | Daybook, May 28, 1874 – April 1875 |
| | 3 | Daybook, April 1, 1876 – May 1878 |
| | 4 | Daybook, “May 1, 1878” [actually June 1, 1878] – Sept. 1880 |
| | 5 | Daybook, Oct. 1, 1880 – June 3, 1881 |
| | 6 | Daybook, June 1, 1882 – Dec. 31, 1884 |
| 2 | 1 | Daybook, Sept., 1892 – July, 1894 |
| | 2 | Daybook, Sept. 1903 – Dec. 1904 |
| | 3 | Daybook, Jan. 1, 1905 – April 14, 1909 |
| | 4 | Ledger, 1902-1909 |
| 3 | 1 | Ledger, Oct. 1, 1909 – 1911 “Drs. Huntington and Coburn” |
| | 2 | Ledger index, c.1874 – c. 1900 |

Series II: Medical School Notebooks

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| 4 | 1 | “General Notes, Dec. 6 th 1868” |
| | 2 | “General Notes, Jan. 18, 1868” [1868-1869] |
| | 3 | “Notes on the lectures of Dr. Clarke [sic], Theory & Practice of Medicine,”
Oct. 7, 1869-Jan. 3, 1870 |
| | 4 | “Notes on the lectures of Prof. Clark, Theory & Practice of Medicine, vol. II,”
Jan. 11-Feb. 23, 1870 |
| | 5 | “Notes on the lectures of Prof. Clark, Theory & Practice of Medicine,” Oct. 4,
1870-Jan. 4, 1871 |
| | 6 | “Notes on the lectures of Prof. Alonzo Clark on the Theory & Practice of
Medicine, 1870-1871” |
| | 7 | “Notes on the lectures of Prof. McLane, Materia Medica, Session of ’69-’70” |
| | 8 | “Notes on Prof. McLane, Materia Medica,” Jan. 25, 1870-Feb. 4, 1871 |
| | 9 | “Notes of Prof. Thomas’s lectures, Oct. 2, 1868” |
| | 10 | “Notes on Prof. Thomas, Obstetrics,” 1870-1871 |
| 5 | 1 | “Clinical Notes Drs. Clark and Thomas,” 1870-1871 |
| | 2 | “Notes on the lectures of Drs. Parker and Markoe, Surgery, Sessions of ’69-’70” |
| | 3 | “Notes on lectures of Dr. Markoe, Surgery,” 1870 |

**George Huntington
Papers, 1845-2000**

Series III: Papers & Addresses

Box Folder

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| 5 | 4 | "Spasmodic asthma," – draft of beginning of first attempt at medical school
inaugural thesis, c.1871, 7 p., manuscript |
| | 5 | "An Inaugural Thesis on Opium," thesis submitted for medical degree, 1872,
24 p., manuscript |
| | 6 | "Chronic Progressive Hereditary or Huntington's Chorea," c.1902-03, 9 p.,
Manuscript [has damage affecting text] |
| | 7 | Address "read at the regular meeting of the N.Y. Neurological Society, Dec. 7 th ,
1909," typewritten, 5 p. |

Series IV: Miscellaneous Family Material

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| 8 | Materials relating to George Huntington and family, 19 th – 20 th century:
includes genealogical information, newspaper clippings, loose financial
papers found in daybooks, WWII ration book belonging to Marjorie S.
Huntington, family reunion flyers, etc. |
| 9 | Journal on religious themes, unidentified author, undated (but c.1950s) |

Series V: Drawings

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| 10 | "The Explosion" |
| 11 | "Genl. Paregorico Castorolium" |
| 12 | Girl in long dress with flower pattern |
| 13 | "He hooked a big shark..." |
| 14 | Lion's head/Lion (2 items) |
| 15 | "Little Annie Rooney" (boats on reverse) – by Abel Huntington, George
Huntington's son |
| 16 | Man in sailboat with oar |
| 17 | Man operating on, or massaging, another man, signed by Huntington, 1879 |
| 18 | Man running from bulls [?], "I tell you I did joost gat oop and doosht!" signed by
Huntington |
| 19 | Man running from skunk [possibly by Abel Huntington?] |
| 20 | Man sitting in chair, woman at window |
| 21 | "Off to the hayfields" |
| 22 | Sailboats in harbor with headland |

**George Huntington
Papers, 1845-2000**

Box Folder

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| | 23 | Sketchbook, c. 1870s-1890s |
| | 24 | "Spring Delight" |
| | 25 | Steamboat on river |
| | 26 | "View of East Hampton from the back garden window of Dr. G.L. Huntington's house..." |
| | 27 | Photograph of Huntington drawing of man trying to read while surrounded by three young children, signed "G.H. 1884" |
| | 28 | Silhouette of woman, mounted on orange paper |
| | 29 | Pencil sketch of tree inscribed "Fort Lee, Sept. 1845" |
| 6 | 1 | Sitting man with legs crossed |
| | 2 | Sitting man with spade |
| | 3 | Bearded man with drapery |
| | 4 | Man in purple doublet |
| | 5 | Man digging with spade |
| | 6 | Standing man holding long stick |
| | 7 | Man in brown doublet, side view |
| | 8 | Sitting man in red doublet, reading |
| | 9 | Man carrying bag over shoulder |
| | 10 | Man using rake [?] |
| | 11 | Man sweeping |
| | 12 | Organ grinder |

Series VI: Stewart family correspondence

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| | 13 | 1872-1879 |
| | 14 | 1880s |
| | 15 | 1890s |
| | 16 | 1900-1909 |
| | 17 | 1910-1933 |
| | 18 | Undated and empty envelopes |

Series VII: Photographs

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| 7 | 1 | George Huntington in carriage (2 items) |
| | 2 | Group photo of George Huntington and family, c.1900 |

**George Huntington
Papers, 1845-2000**

Box Folder

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|------|--|
| 3 | Huntington home, Hopewell, N.Y., early 20 th century |
| 4 | Sites in LaGrangeville and Hopewell, N.Y. associated with Huntington:
color photos, c. 2000 |
| 5-6 | Huntington, Charles G. & Marjorie S., and family [GH son and his wife] |
| 7-8 | Huntington, Charles G., II, & Elizabeth [GH grandson & his wife] |
| 9 | Huntington, Edwin H. & family [GH son] |
| 10 | Huntington, Eleanor (Ketcham) [GH daughter] |
| 11 | Huntington, Eleanor (Ketcham), 1930 [or possibly Elizabeth Huntington] |
| 12 | Huntington, Elizabeth |
| 13 | Huntington, Elizabeth [or possibly Eleanor Huntington Ketcham] |
| 14 | Huntington, Kate, holding Able Huntington |
| 15 | Bridge, Mame Huntington [GH sister] |
| 16 | Huntington family group portrait, c. 1940s? |
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| 8 | 1-3 Stewart and Bannister families |
| | 4 Stewart and Bannister families: tintypes |
| | 5-6 Unidentified |

Series VIII: Oversize Items

Flat Box 1

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|----|--|
| 1 | Huntington, Charles G. II [GH grandson], as child |
| 2 | Huntington, Charles G. II and Barbara Sealey Huntington: wedding pictures?
(2 items) |
| 3 | Huntington, Charles G. II [?], as a young man |
| 4 | Huntington, Doris [GH granddaughter] |
| 5 | Huntington, Barbara Sealey |
| 6 | Unidentified portraits, late 19 th -early 20 th century (2 items) |
| 7 | "Mr. & Mrs. Jos. S. Kennedy, Robert S. Kennedy & Miss Despierris" motoring in
Pelham Bay Park, New York City, Oct. 16, 1910 |
| 8 | Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, Centennial Certificate to Charles Huntington,
1954 |
| 9 | Huntington, George: portrait in later life |
| 10 | Huntington, George: North Carolina medical license, 1902 |

**George Huntington
Papers, 1845-2000**

Flat Box 2

The Shower of Pearls: A Collection of the Most Beautiful Duets...Arranged with an Accompaniment for the Piano-Forte (Boston: Oliver Ditson & Co.; New York: C. H. Ditson & Co., 1859). With inscription on front free flyleaf from George Huntington to his wife, Mary, Christmas, 1875

Bound portfolio of US sheet music, various authors, 1850s-1860s, many with ownership or gift inscriptions by George Huntington

Shelved Separately:

Daybook, March 1889-Sept. 1892

Daybook, March, 1909-March, 1911

Daybook, April, 1911-Jan., 1915

Ledger, April 1871-1901

Ledger, 1874-1876 [part of the volume covers his partnership with Dr. Stephen Green]

Ledger, April 1905-1914

Map Case 2-9:

Edwin H. Huntington, Internship Certificate, Ellis Hospital, Schenectady, NY, 1915

Shelf 213 E:

George Huntington, Diploma, College of Physicians and Surgeons, 1871