

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

[Henry Alsop Riley Papers](#)

RILEY, HENRY ALSOP, 1887-1966.

Henry Alsop Riley papers, 1908-1963 (bulk, 1928-1962)

1.25 cubic feet (3 document boxes, 1 flat box and 3 oversize items)

#M-0162

SUMMARY: Correspondence, reports, printed material, diplomas, certificates, artifacts and photographs, 1908-1963, documenting the professional career of Henry Alsop Riley, professor of neurology at Columbia University.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: Henry Alsop Riley, neurologist, was born July 23, 1887 in New York City, the son of Henry August and Marianna L. Riley. He was educated at Yale (B.A., 1908) and the College of Physicians & Surgeons (P&S) of Columbia University (M.D., M.A. in anatomy, 1912). After a residency at Presbyterian Hospital, he joined the faculty of P&S in 1915, becoming professor of neurology and neuroanatomy in 1930, professor of clinical neurology in 1939, and professor emeritus in 1953. From 1922 he was an attending neurologist at the Neurological Institute of New York, and was Director of its West Service, 1935-1952. He maintained a large and active private practice and was one of the country's leading neurological consultants.

Riley's scientific interests focused on the anatomy of the nervous system, a subject in which he was closely associated with his fellow faculty member, Frederick Tilney. With Tilney he published *Form and Functions of the Central Nervous System* (1920), which remains a classic study. His major work was *An Atlas of the Basal Ganglia, Brain and Spinal Cord* (1943; reprinted 1960), a complete photographic study.

Active in a wide variety of scientific and medical organizations, Riley was best known as one of the founders of the International Neurological Congress. He was Secretary General of the first Congress, held in Bern, Switzerland, in 1931 and was a Vice-President of subsequent Congresses into the 1960s.

Riley received many honors and awards including an honorary doctor of science degree from Columbia (1953), and the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center Distinguished Service Medal (1953). He was elected to numerous foreign medical and scientific organizations and was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor of France in 1949. He died in New York, November 1, 1966.

ORGANIZATION: Organized in six series: I. Biographical; II. Neurological Institute of New York/Dept. of Neurology, College of Physicians & Surgeons, Columbia University; III. International Neurological Congress; IV. Correspondence, general; V. Photographs; VI. Certificates and diplomas.

SCOPE AND CONTENT: The Riley papers largely document his professional life, though there is some personal material regarding his finances and travel plans. Though dating from 1908 until 1963, the bulk of the material dates from 1928 to 1962.

Series I: Biographical. Resumés from throughout his career; articles about Riley; obituaries; memorial statements from Columbia, Presbyterian Hospital and other organizations; and fragments of a scrapbook with newsclippings mentioning Riley.

Series II. Neurological Institute/Dept. of Neurology. Correspondence regarding the Institute, including the controversy surrounding the resignation of Tracy Putnam as Director (1947); materials for neuroanatomy courses taught by Riley; and material relating to his retirement in 1952.

Series III. International Neurological Congress. Correspondence, reports, and printed material relating to the meetings of the International Neurological Congress. The bulk of the material relates to the first Congress, held at Bern in 1931. As General Secretary of the Congress, Riley was deeply involved in its organization. There are letters from dozens of prominent neurologists including B. Brouwer, Constantin von Economo, Otfried Foerster, Georges Guillaín, Otto Marburg, Ivan Pavlov, Santiago Ramon y Cajal, Sir Charles Sherrington, Ludo van Bogaert, and Theodore Ziehen. Also included is a reminiscence by Riley (1960) of his role in the Congress.

Series IV: Correspondence, general. Correspondence, mostly letters received, relating to Riley's professional and personal life. Though dating from 1912 to 1962, the bulk is from after his retirement in 1953. Correspondents include both fellow neurologists and family members.

Series V: Photographs and artifacts. Includes a picture of the delegates to the First International Neurological Congress (1931) and the original photographs used in Riley's *Atlas of the Basal Ganglia, Brain and Spinal Cord* (1943; reprinted 1960).

Series VI: Certificates and diplomas. Certificates of membership in professional organizations and his diplomas from Yale and Columbia.

REMOVALS: A photographic portrait of Riley has been transferred to the general photograph collection.

PROVENANCE: Gift of Mary Edgar Riley Patton and Sarah C. Riley, daughter and granddaughter, respectively, of Henry Riley, 1991.

Subjects:

Bogaert, Ludo van.
Brouwer, Bernard, b. 1881.
Economo, Constantine, Freiherr von, 1876-1931.
Foerster, Otfried, 1873-1941.
Guillaín, Georges, 1876-1961.
Marburg, Otto, 1874-1948.

Pavlov, Ivan Petrovich, 1849-1936.
Putnam, Tracy Jackson, 1894-
Ramón y Cajal, Santiago, 1852-1934.
Riley, Henry Alsop, 1887-
Sherrington, Charles Scott, Sir, 1857-1952.
Tilney, Frederick, 1875-1938.
Ziehen, Th. (Theodor), 1862-1950.
Columbia University. College of Physicians and Surgeons. Dept. of Neurology.
Neurological Institute of New York.
International Neurological Congress (1st : 1931 : Bern, Switzerland)
International Neurological Congress (2nd : 1935 : London, England)
International Neurological Congress (3rd : 1939 : Copenhagen, Denmark)
International Neurological Congress (5th : 1953 : Lisbon, Portugal)
International Neurological Congress (7th : 1961 : Rome, Italy)
Neurologists.
Neurology--Congresses.
Neurology--Societies, etc.
Neurology--Study and teaching.

Arranged and described by Stephen E. Novak, August, 2001

**Henry Alsop Riley
Papers, 1908-1963**

Box 1

Series I: Biographical

1. Biographical information: resumes, articles, etc.
2. Obituaries and memorial statements, 1962-63
3. Bibliography, 1951 and undated
4. Hospital appointments, 1952-61 (in alphabetical order by hospital name)
5. Scrapbook pages, 1935, 1951-52, 1959

Series II: Neurological Institute of New York/Department of Neurology, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University

6. Correspondence, 1930-53
7. Reports and studies, undated but circa 1940s
8. Neuroanatomy course: schedules, syllabi, outlines, 1950-51
9. "The Intermediate Years" typescript of Riley's history (1959) of the NI, 1909-1949
10. Retirement: newspaper clippings, telegrams and letters of congratulations, 1952
11. Printed material: menus, procedures, etc., 1921, 1933 and undated

Series III: International Neurological Congress

12. Correspondence, 1928-29
13. Correspondence, 1930-33
14. Correspondence, 1936-37, 1954-60
15. Reports and memos regarding organization of the Congress, 1950s
16. Reminiscences of the I International Neurological Congress (1931) by Riley, 1960
17. I International Neurological Congress (Bern, 1931): printed material
18. II International Neurological Congress (London, 1935): printed material
19. III International Neurological Congress (Copenhagen, 1939): printed material
20. V International Neurological Congress (Lisbon, 1953): printed material
21. VII International Congress of Neurology (Rome, 1961): printed material
22. Printed material, general, 1950s

Box 2

Series IV: Correspondence, general

1. "A," 1945-61
2. "B," 1947-62
3. "C," 1949-61

**Henry Alsop Riley
Papers, 1908-1963**

Box 2 (cont.)

4. Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center: retirement from Presbyterian Hospital; 25th anniversary of Medical Center
5. Columbia University: appointment letters, 1921-39, 1953
6. Columbia University: general, 1912-59
7. "D," 1947-61
8. "E," 1946-61
9. "F," 1934-60
10. "G" – "H," 1948-61
11. "I" – "J," 1941-1961
12. "K," 1948-62
13. "L," 1947-59
14. "M" – "P," 1942-1954
15. "R" – "V," and unidentified, 1929-1956
16. Tilney, Frederick: correspondence, 1924-37, and Riley's biographical sketch of Tilney for the *Dictionary of American Biography* (1956)

Box 3

Series V: Photographs & Artifacts

1. Delegates to the I International Neurological Congress, Bern, 1931
- 2.- 4. Photographs from Riley's *Atlas of the basal ganglia, brain stem and spinal cord* (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1943; reprinted, 1960)

World War I medals; personal bookplate; and woodblock for bookplate loose in box

Box 4

Series VI: Certificates and diplomas, 1908-1962

Includes diplomas from Yale and Columbia and certificates of membership in scientific organizations both U.S. and foreign. Three oversize items are shelved separately.