

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

[Allen O. Whipple Papers](#)

**WHIPPLE, ALLEN O. (ALLEN OLDFATHER), 1881-1963.**

**Allen Oldfather Whipple papers, 1912-2000 (bulk 1935-1964)**

**2.5 cubic feet (5 boxes, 1 carton, 1 flat box, 3 items)**

**#M-0201**

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:** Allen O. Whipple, a surgeon best known for his operation for cancer of the pancreas, the pancreaticoduodenectomy or “Whipple procedure,” was born in Urmia, Persia (now Iran), on Sept. 2, 1881, to William Levi and Mary Allen Whipple, American-born Presbyterian missionaries. Whipple spent his childhood in Persia, learning to read and write Armenian, Farsi, Syriac, and Turkish and gaining a life-long interest in the cultures, history, and peoples of the Middle East.

Whipple was educated at Princeton (B.S., 1904) and the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons (M.D., 1908). He was surgical resident at Roosevelt Hospital in 1908-1909 and then spent time on the staff of the Sloane Hospital for Women.

Whipple was appointed instructor in surgery at P&S in 1912 and thereafter made a swift ascent up the academic ranks, becoming an associate, 1917; associate professor, 1919; and professor and department chairman, 1921. He was named the first holder of the Valentine Mott Professorship of Surgery in 1931. At the same time, he held comparable ranks at Columbia's main teaching hospital, Presbyterian, being named director of the surgical service in 1921. He retired as both professor and chairman in 1946 and was named Valentine Mott professor emeritus.

The operation that bears Whipple's name had been tried as early as the 1890s and the German surgeon Walther Kausch had done similar work in the 1910s. Whipple improved the procedure in 1934-35 and devised further refinements in 1940. The current operation, sometimes known as the Kausch-Whipple procedure, still closely resembles Whipple's original work and is considered one of the most difficult commonly-performed surgical operations.

Whipple had an active retirement. He served as Clinical Director at Memorial Hospital (now Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center), 1946-1950, and was visiting professor at the American University in Beirut in 1946-1947. He did extensive consulting work and wrote three books: *The Story of Wound Healing and Wound Repair* (1963); *The Evolution of Surgery in the United States* (1963); and *The Role of the Nestorians and Muslims in the History of Medicine* (1967). He died at Princeton, N.J. on April 16, 1963.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT:** The Whipple papers include biographical materials, writings, photographs, certificates and awards, medals, a scrapbook, and realia. While there is some correspondence, it is not extensive and, like the bulk of the collection, largely dates from his retirement years. There is little relating to his long career at Columbia University and Presbyterian Hospital.

Topics documented in the papers include the formation of the Allen O. Whipple Surgical Society; the 1952 dinner in his honor tendered by surgical colleagues at which Whipple's portrait was presented to Presbyterian Hospital; his participation in the William Halsted Centenary Celebration at Johns Hopkins University; and some correspondence with his fellow surgeon, Evarts A. Graham.

The papers have an extensive collection of his writings, including a bound volume of scientific articles; a typescript copy of his memoirs; several drafts of his book, *The Role of the Nestorians and Muslims in the History of Medicine*; and copies of all of his books. There is also a copy of his mother's memoir of her time as a missionary in Iran, entitled "Twenty-Five Years in Persia."

The scrapbook dates largely from 1946-1948 and largely documents his time at the American University of Beirut and his travels in the Mideast. It includes newspaper clippings, correspondence, programs, photographs, and ephemera.

There is also a large collection of his awards, membership certificates, and medals.

**ORGANIZATION:** Organized in 7 series: I. Subjects; II. Writings; III. Photographs; IV. Certificates and Awards; V. Bound Volumes; VI. Oversize; VII. Realia.

**LANGUAGE:** English; Arabic; Persian.

**ACCESS:** Unrestricted.

**RELATED COLLECTIONS:** Archives and Special Collections' "M-Collection" of books relating to the history of Columbia University has both a copy of Whipple's memoir and the edited version by Samir Johna and Moshe Schein, *The Memoirs of Allen Oldfather Whipple: The Man behind the Whipple Operation* (2003). Both can be found through CLIO, the Columbia University Libraries OPAC.

The papers came with a portrait bust of Whipple by an unknown sculptor and a portrait of him by Clinton Peters, painted in 1934.

**PROCESSING NOTE:** Because of the fragility of the scrapbook, a large quantity of loose material found in it was removed and placed in folders.

**PROVENANCE:** Gift of the Estate of Richard J. Bing, Whipple's son-in-law, 2011 (acc. #2011.020).

**Subjects:**

Graham, Evarts A. (Evarts Ambrose), 1883-1957.

Halsted, William, 1852-1922.

Whipple, Allen Oldfather, 1881-1963.

Allen O. Whipple Surgical Society.

American University of Beirut.

Iran – Description and travel – 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Medicine – History.

Medicine, Arab.

Middle East – Description and travel – 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Surgeons – United States – Biography.

Surgery – United States – History.

History of Medicine, Medieval.

Surgery – history – United States.

Awards.

Certificates.

Diplomas.

Medals.

Photographs.

Scrapbooks.

Papers processed and finding aid written by Stephen E. Novak, 2011.

**Allen O. Whipple  
Papers, 1912-2000**

**Box    Folder**

**Series I: Subjects**

- |          |    |  |
|----------|----|--|
| <b>1</b> | 1  | Biographical materials, 1940-1970  |
|          | 2  | Death and estate, 1963-1964, 1977  |
|          | 3  | Académie de Chirurgie [France], 1946   |
|          | 4  | Allen O. Whipple Surgical Society: Programs, 1960-1963, 1977; constitution, 1976; correspondence, 1969-1979                    |
|          | 5  | As-Salaam Club: Program for Whipple Dinner, Sept. 12, 1946   |
|          | 6  | Boston Surgical Society: Citation for Bigelow Medal, Nov. 7, 1941  |
|          | 7  | Graham, Evarts A.: correspondence, memorial statements, 1955-1957  |
|          | 8  | William Halsted Centenary: Whipple's article for <i>Surgery</i> ; notes; correspondence re dinner at Johns Hopkins, etc., 1952 |
|          | 9  | Pilcher, Cobb, 1946  |
|          | 10 | Whipple portrait presentation dinner, Sept. 22, 1952: correspondence, program, newspaper articles                              |
|          | 11 | President's Certificate of Merit: correspondence, program, 1948  |
|          | 12 | <i>The Role of the Nestorians and the Muslims in the History of Medicine</i> : correspondence re publication, 1961-1962, 1967  |
|          | 13 | Scrapbook: loose correspondence removed, 1946-1947   |
| <b>2</b> | 1  | Scrapbook: Loose programs and ephemera removed, 1946-1948  |
|          | 2  | "Twenty-Five Years in Persia," memoir by Mary Whipple (mother), undated but circa 1930s  |
|          | 3  | Wayne State University: Visiting professorship, 1962   |
|          | 4  | Whipple Procedure: articles about it, 1935-2000  |
|          | 5  | Wound healing: Notebook, undated, but ca. 1960   |

**Series II: Writings**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 6 | Whipple articles, 1936, 1955-1959  |
| 7 | "Experiences in the Near and Middle East in Search of Ancient Hospitals": article and map, undated but ca. 1950s |
| 8 | Memoirs: Typescript (draft?), 1959, 1962   |
| 9 | <i>The Role of the Nestorians and Muslims in the History of Medicine</i> : Draft, "Version XVII"                 |

**Allen O. Whipple  
Papers, 1912-2000**

**Box Folder**

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| <b>3</b> | 1 <i>The Role of the Nestorians...</i> : Draft, "Version XVIII" |
|          | 2 <i>The Role of the Nestorians...</i> : Draft, "Version XX"    |
|          | 3 <i>The Role of the Nestorians...</i> : Draft, final version?  |

**Series III: Photographs**

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 4  | Whipple portrait, ca. 1940s  |
| 5  | Whipple portraits by Bachrach, 1930s? (2 items)  |
| 6  | Whipple portrait by Bachrach used in <i>National Cyclopedia of American Biography</i> , undated (2 copies) |
| 7  | Whipple receiving President's Certificate of Merit, 1948   |
| 8  | As-Salaam Club dinner for Whipple, Sept. 12, 1948 (3 items)  |
| 9  | Halsted Centenary Dinner, Baltimore, MD, Feb. 7, 1952 (3 items)  |
| 10 | Parsons, William Barclay and Fordyce B. St. John, undated [1946?]  |
| 11 | Scrapbook: Loose photographs removed, ca.1946-48 and undated   |
| 12 | Dept. of Surgery, Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, March, 1928  |

**Series IV: Certificates and Awards**

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| <b>4</b> | 1      Chicago Surgical Society, May 24, 1935   |
|          | 2      Roswell Park Medical Citation, April 17, 1948  |
|          | 3      Royal College of Surgeons, England: Election as Honorary Fellow, Dec. 19, 1945<br>[photoduplicate only]                            |
|          | 4      Society of University Surgeons: Recognition of retirement from Columbia, signed<br>by all the members of the Society, Feb. 8, 1946 |
|          | 5      Washington University, St. Louis: Honorary Degree, June 8, 1955  |

**Series V: Bound Volumes**

**5 Loose in box:**

Whipple, Allen O.

Reprints, 1912-1946, 1 v.

*The Role of the Nestorians and Muslims in the History of Medicine*. Princeton, N.J.:  
Princeton University Press, 1967.

**Allen O. Whipple  
Papers, 1912-2000**

**Box Folder**

**5 Loose in box**

*The Story of Wound Healing and Wound Repair*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1963. In dust-jacket (damaged).

*The Evolution of Surgery in the United States*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1963.  
In dust-jacket.

Allen O. Whipple Surgical Society. *The Training of Surgeons in the Future*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1968. In dust-jacket.

*Annals of Surgery*, v.124, n. 2 (Aug. 1946) "In Honor of Allen O. Whipple" (specially bound in leather).

Severinghaus, Aura, Harry J. Carmen, and William E. Cadbury, Jr. *Preparation for Medical Education: A Restudy. The Report of the Committee on the Resurvey of Preprofessional Education in the Liberal Arts College, Association of American Medical Colleges*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961. With inscription on front free endpaper from Severinghaus to Whipple dated June 2, 1962.

Meade, Richard Hardaway. *An Introduction to the History of General Surgery*. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1968. With a note from the author to Mary Whipple Bing, daughter of A.O. Whipple.

Century Association. *Yearbook*, 1934, 1959.

Persian book, subject and date unidentified.

**6 Loose in box:**

Scrapbook, 1 v., ca. 1946-1948 largely documenting Whipple's time in the Middle East when he was professor of surgery at the American University of Beirut, 1946-1947

**Series VI: Oversize**

**In Oversize Flat Box 1:**

Memorial Statement, Veterans Administration Hospital, East Orange, N.J., 1963

Certificate (award?) in Arabic (framed)

**Allen O. Whipple  
Papers, 1912-2000**

**In Oversize Flat Box 1:**

Diploma, Princeton University, June 15, 1904; signed by Woodrow Wilson as university president (framed)

Portrait of Whipple (in pastels?), by French artist Georges Plasse (1878-1948), signed and inscribed to Whipple by the artist, dated "New York, October 1921-March 1922" (framed)

**In Map Case 2-7:**

Roosevelt Hospital House Staff, ca. 1908-09

Group portrait, unidentified [perhaps the College of Physicians & Surgeons Omega Club?], ca. early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Series VIII: Realia**

Medals (located in Box 5)

1. Princeton University Bicentennial Medal, 1946
2. Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center Distinguished Service Medal, 1953, with ribbon (in case)
3. Princeton University Trustee Chair Plate
4. Isaac Ridgeway Trimble Award, April 17, 1948 (in case)
5. American Medical Association Award, 1951
6. American Clinical and Climatological Association Gordon Wilson Lecturer Award, Lake Placid Club, Oct. 15, 1954
7. Académie de Médecine Award, 1947
8. Académie de Chirurgie Award, 1946
9. Evarts Ambrose Graham Award, 1955
10. Boston Surgical Society, Henry Jacob Bigelow Award, Nov. 7, 1941 (in case)
11. New York Academy of Medicine Award, 1955

**Allen O. Whipple  
Papers, 1912-2000**

**In Map Case 2-2:**

Round Tiffany sterling silver platter presented to Whipple at his retirement with the inscription “To Dr. Allen O. Whipple as an affectionate reminder of many years of friendship and common endeavor at Presbyterian Hospital in the City of New York, May, 1946” and with the engraved signatures of eleven Hospital administrators, Columbia University deans, and fellow members of the Dept. of Surgery.